

as Al Kaline did, who was a Major League Baseball player. He throws as well as Al Kaline. He hits probably better than Al Kaline did.

Washington is fortunate to have these two fine young men. Not only are they great baseball players, but from everything we know about the two young men, they are good role models for young men and women around the country.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, will the majority leader yield before changing the subject?

Mr. REID. Yes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I say to my friend from Nevada, I was there. I had a chance to see Strasburg. As remarkable as the 14 strikeouts my friend referred to is the fact he did not walk anybody. What a remarkable athlete. We can only hope and pray that his arm holds up and that he has the kind of career everyone is anticipating. There was literally electricity in the air. It was an exciting event. It was great to be there.

Mr. REID. I so appreciate my counterpart talking about that. I wish I could have been there. But it was, even watching it on TV—gee whiz, there are those of us who love sports, and I know my friend loves basketball, especially that which takes place in Kentucky and the others, of course, in Kentucky. But this was really a remarkable performance. For Washington, which has been so starved for a good athletic team of some kind, it was nice.

I say to my friend through the Chair, when I was going to law school here, I watched two Major League Baseball games in the old Griffith Stadium. Oh, they were so much fun. I don't know who won. I am sure the Washington team lost. I know the two teams they played both times were the Yankees, where I watched Roger Maris, Mickey Mantle, Yogi Berra, and all those great players.

From this work in which we are engaged, which is always so serious, it is nice once in a while to divert our attention to something that is a little more relaxing. That baseball game last night was not relaxing, but it sure was a lot of fun.

Mr. President, my staff just indicated that I said we would not be in on Friday and Monday. We probably will be in; there will just be no votes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if I may add one point, the majority leader mentioned that Bryce Harper was drafted by the Nationals on Monday. I look forward to him being the next Nevada contribution to the Washington area, right after my friend the majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to my friend, it is a wonderful story. His brother, who was a great pitcher at California State Fullerton—which won the NCAA National Baseball Championship—his brother thought so much of his little brother, who is 4 years younger than he is, that he transferred from California State Fullerton to a

junior college so he could play with his brother. The elder Harper is a pitcher, and the catcher is his little brother. The senior member of the brotherhood of Harper ball players, his record was 12 and 1 this year.

Another word about Bryce Harper. Community college baseball is very competitive. The record for the most home runs for any player in junior college baseball was 12. Bryce Harper hit 30. His batting average as a 17-year-old boy playing with men was .450. In one game, he was six for six. I think he had three or four home runs. It is an interesting story.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I will say that what one can conclude from this is that next year, when the Senate is not in session in the evening, both the Democratic and Republican leaders will be at the Nats games.

Mr. REID. I think that is pretty clear.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

URGENT CRISES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, our Nation faces many urgent crises at the moment. Americans are looking for solutions. They are not getting any from Washington. Whether it is the housing crisis or the financial crisis, the debt crisis or the crisis in the gulf, what they are getting is a White House and a Democratic majority in Congress that seems more intent on pursuing a government-driven political agenda than finding commonsense solutions to the problems about which all of us are concerned.

Americans are exasperated by all this, but they should not be surprised because if there is one motto that defines this administration, it is the one delivered by the White House Chief of Staff in a revealing moment just after the President's election. I am referring, of course, to what Rahm Emanuel famously referred to as "Rule 1: Never allow a crisis to go to waste." It is a fitting slogan for an administration which saw a crisis at some of America's great automaking firms as an opportunity for the government to extend its reach into industrial policy, which saw the panic on Wall Street as an opportunity for government to extend its reach further into Main Street, which saw out-of-control costs in health care as an opportunity to extend government's reach further into health care decisions of every American, and which is now talking about using a nightmarish environmental calamity in the gulf as a prime opportunity to extend government's reach even further into Americans' lives through a new, job-killing national energy tax that would hit every single household and business, small or large, in our country.

Think about it. For more than 50 straight days, an underwater geyser of oil, now roughly the size of Vermont, has been polluting the gulf. This is the kind of crisis that in the past would have united the Nation in a focused effort to solve the problem. Yet day after day, as this toxic oil continues to flow, what we get from the administration is some new twist on the blame game or some ham-handed effort to appear in control of the situation.

Meanwhile, in Congress, we are getting much the same thing. The deficit extenders bill that is now on the floor was supposed to be about giving job creators some assurance that the tax benefits they currently are receiving and on which they depend to retain workers will be there the next time they have to make a major business-related decision. Yet Democrats are using this bill as another opportunity to extend government's reach. Desperate for funds to bail out programs, they are raiding a trust fund—get this—created to pay for just the kind of cleanup we now need in the gulf. They are quintupling the tax that oil companies pay into the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund that was created in the wake of the Exxon Valdez fix, and instead of using this money to clean up the oil that is spewing in the gulf, they are raiding the trust fund to pay for new unrelated spending.

Dipping into the oilspill trust fund in order to pay for something else—in other words, they are using the crisis in the gulf not only as a cover for even more government spending but as a major source of funding for it. This is really an outrage, and it should give every American a window into the Democratic approach to spending, as well as the lack of seriousness about the debt. Frankly, they just cannot restrain themselves. That is the only possible excuse for raiding this trust fund for unrelated government spending.

At the same time, as Americans wonder when this gusher will ever be plugged, we hear word that the administration and my good friend, the majority leader, want to piggyback their controversial new national energy tax—also known as cap and trade—to an oilspill response bill that could and should be an opportunity for true bipartisan cooperation. So again we see the administration using a crisis—in this case the disaster in the gulf—as an opportunity to muscle through Congress another deeply unpopular bill that has profound implications for small businesses and struggling households.

Look, if the health care debate taught us anything—anything at all—it is that Americans want these kinds of massive bills to be debated out in the open, not rushed past them on a holiday or tucked into a must-pass bill aimed at alleviating the kind of suffering we are seeing in the gulf. The problem for Democrats is that debating the Democratic cap-and-trade bill